1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Tobacco Growing in Thrace

249 276 656 During an interview with some peasants in the office of the commune secretary of Toxotae in Thrace during May 1955, I was surprised to see some of the men pull out pink cigarette paper in which they expertly rolled cigarettes for a leisurely smoke.

"But why the pink paper?" I wanted to know.

"We are tobacco producers," they answered with an air of distinct pride. "We can keep some of the crop for our own use, but must use pink paper to distinguish our cigarettes from those that are bought."

"Yes," a gendarme added. "Any time I see a person smoking a pink cigarette I can go up to ask for a certificate showing that he is a tobacco grower and thus entitled to 'roll his own'!"

249 [123] [312] This conversation, which lasted for more than four hours, gave me an even better understanding of tobacco farming than I had gained on previous trips, as did frequent visits in the fields with the peasants who were transferring the plants from the seedbeds to the carefully prepared land or hauling barrels of water in their oxcart from a spring or well to the place where the planting was going on. What was most helpful of all, however, was the intimate story of one tobacco village, as described in the Near East Foundation study mentioned earlier. It gave me a deeper realization of the problems that the people there continue to face.'

621 162 [167] Dafnon, a village of 1145 people in 1952, is northwest of the city of Xanthe. This community, like so many in Northern Greece, was settled by Greek refugees from Asia Minor and the Pontus following the departure of 127 Turkish families in 1924. By 1935, 294 families had moved in, attracted as they were by the rich vegetation, the good climate of this semi-mountainous area, and the possibility of raising a high-priced product such as tobacco. When the first official land redistribution was carried out in 1935, and a second in 1938, it became apparent that the allotments were too small for the support of a family, and so people began to leave. Today there are 255 families.

621 ●36 [727] [526] [373] The village, covering slightly over 70 acres, sprawls over a hill. Two former Turkish mosques have been converted into Greek Orthodox churches; six grocery shops have total assets of less than $1700; three of the six coffeehouses attract the young men because each has a gramophone and a battery radio; the village school, destroyed along with many of the houses during the guerrilla war in 1948, was rebuilt in 1950. Outside the village is an athletic field on which 30 young men, members of the sports club, practice faithfully in an effort to uphold their reputation as the best football (soccer) team in the area. In the evening, the streets are dark, for Dafnon has no electricity and its people must rely upon kerosene lamps.

621 463 423 Of the 255 families previously mentioned, 220 own land; 32 own no